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took occasion to repeat that he still thought it preferable to avoid the rotation of the telescope tube in its cradle altogether, which the altazimuth mounting he had proposed would effect, and yet still provide for an equatoreal movement in the telescope, although he was aware that Mr. De la Rue was of opinion that the difficulties of mounting very large telescopes on an equatoreal stand might be overcome. The Astronomer Royal also pointed out, that if such a mounting were adopted, it would be desirable to so construct the system of supports for resisting the pressure perpendicular to the surface of the mirror, as to admit of the fulcra of the levers for resisting edgewise pressure being carried by them, in order that the ends of the levers might support the pressures in all directions equably, without constraining the mirror in any way, and without impeding its change of position by any sensible friction.

The Mediterranean: a Memoir Physical, Historical, and Nautical. By Rear-Admiral William Henry Smyth, K.S.F., D.C.L. &c. &c. 519 pp., 8vo. London: John W. Parker and Son. 1854.

In this volume Admiral Smyth has presented the results of many years of personal observation and research in the Mediterranean, bringing to the aid of his labours a vast amount of valuable scientific, literary, and antiquarian lore. As a contribution to Physical Geography, the merits of this work are obvious at first sight, and have not failed to be duly appreciated by the most competent authorities on the subject; but it is no less calculated to advance the objects of Nautical Astronomy, considered in its most comprehensive signification as a branch of mathematical and physical inquiry. The work is divided into five parts. Part I. contains a chorographical view of the shores of the Mediterranean, with especial reference to their produce and commerce. This may be considered as introductory to the scientific part of the work. Part II. treats of the currents, tides, and waters of the Mediterranean Sea. Part III. is on the winds, weather, and atmospherical phenomena of the regions of the Mediterranean. In Part IV. the author gives an interesting account of the early surveys of the Mediterranean, and concludes with an exposition of his own labours, having for their object the improvement of the existing state of knowledge on the subject. The valuable character of Admiral Smyth's Marine Surveys, — which extended over the interval comprised between the years 1810 and 1824, — was soon recognised by the Admiralty, who caused charts of them to be engraved and published, which have been long in general use. In the fifth and concluding part of his work, the author gives the determinations of the Maritime Positions upon which his charts were based. It contains

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* In connexion with these remarks, the reader may consult with advantage the substance of a lecture delivered by the Astronomer Royal on the large reflecting telescopes of the Earl of Rosse and Mr. Lassell, which is publishd in vol. ix. of the *Monthly Notices* (p. 110, *et seq.*).

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the longitudes and latitudes of about 1500 points distributed on the coasts of Spain, France, Italy, &c. &c. The remarks accompanying each determination are expressed by means of symbols, which are the same as those used by Lieut. Raper in his well-known treatise on the Practice of Navigation. The Admiral suggests the expediency of introducing a few additional symbols, but he assigns to his friend, Lieut. Raper, the execution of this task on the occasion of publishing the next edition of his standard work.

Die Wunder des Himmels oder gemeinfassliche Darstellung des Weltsystems. Von J. J. von Littrow. Vierte Auflage. Nach den neuesten Fortschritten der Wissenschaft bearbeitet von Karl v. Littrow, Director der Sternwarte zu Wien, &c. &c. 8vo. (pp. 833), Stuttgardt, 1854.

J. J. von Littrow's Atlas des gestirnten Himmels fur Freunde der Astronomie. Zweite vielfach verbesserte und vermehrte Auflage, herausgegeben von Karl von Littrow. Stuttgardt, 1854.

The work on popular astronomy by the late Professor Littrow has long been much esteemed in Germany, as is proved by the appearance of four successive editions. The present edition has been adapted to the existing state of astronomical science. The work is divided into four parts. The first part treats of theoretical astronomy; the second part is upon descriptive astronomy and the topography of the heavens; the third part is devoted to physical astronomy; and the fourth is upon the description and use of astronomical instruments. The Atlas above entitled forms a suitable accompaniment to the work.

Report of the Astronomer Royal to the Board of Visitors, read at the Annual Visitation of the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, 1854, *June* 3.

The present Report to the Board of Visitors may be understood as recording the general condition of the Observatory on 1854, May 26, and the transactions from 1853, May 22, to that time.

Grounds and Buildings.—I alluded in the last Report to the necessity for a new fire-proof room. The want of this became so evident that in the last autumn I submitted to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty a proposal for constructing one in the present year; and in consequence a sum of 550*l.*, applicable to that purpose, has been granted on the Navy Estimates. The plan has been arranged in concert with Lieut.-Colonel Greene, R.E., civil architect of the Admiralty. * * * *†

Astronomical Instruments.—The transit-circle has not received or required any alteration. Its efficiency is perfect.

The new mounting of the quicksilver-trough, to which I alluded

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† Several entire paragraphs are here omitted: the same is to be understood of those other parts where asterisks occur.

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